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Lucia A Keegan 08/14/2006 05:18:44 PM From DB/Inbox: Lucia A Keegan

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Text:

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 05463

SIPDIS
cxparis:
ACTION: UNESCO
INFO: SCI POL ECON AMBU AMB AMBO DCM

DISSEMINATION: UNESCOX
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: CHARGE: AKOSS
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0343
INFO RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 2471
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0856
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0546
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 0423
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 0924

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 005463

SIPDIS

FROM USMISSION UNESCO PARIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/106/2016
TAGS: [UNESCO](#) [UNSC](#) [AL](#)
SUBJECT: UNESCO: POSSIBLE EXECUTIVE BOARD RESOLUTION ON
LEBANESE CONFLICT

REF: STATE 130145

11. (U) Classified by Andrew Koss, Deputy Chief of Mission,
reason 1.4. (D)

12. (C) Charge Koss met August 10 with Lebanese Charge d'affaires
Salim Baddoura to discuss the draft resolution (DR) on Lebanon
for the next UNESCO Executive Board (EB) coming up in late
September/early October. Koss used reftel talking points to
urge the Lebanese to withdraw the resolution. Baddoura refused
and indicated he is under instructions from Beirut.

13. (C) We subsequently learned that the current DR was actually
tabled by Moroccan Ambassador Aziza Benani and not by Lebanon.
(Comment: Benani is a long-time UNESCO fixture who previously
served as chair of the Executive Board. She also operates on
her own, without instructions. During the cultural diversity
convention negotiations, Embassy Rabat reported that she was
making the policy decisions and not the Ministry.)

14. (C) Baddoura told Charge that the present DR is just a
place-holder on the agenda with no content, but he said it will
deal with post-conflict reconstruction of Lebanese historic
monuments (not necessarily World Heritage sites), the education
system, communications and the environment. (Comment: While
post-conflict reconstruction of the former two is within
UNESCO's mandate, the latter two are not within the
organization's mandate.) Baddoura added that the content will
very much depend on the evolving situation in the coming weeks
and the results of the Security Council resolution, but he did
not expect it to be finalized until September. He also said
that Lebanon has the support of all the Arab states at UNESCO.

¶15. (C) When Charge made the case that UNESCO should not be politicized and should keep its tradition of consensus, Baddoura replied that he hopes to have a consensus resolution similar to the resolutions passed at each EB on Jerusalem and the occupied territories, but under no circumstances would he negotiate with the Israelis. Still, he expressed a desire to remain in close contact with the U.S. Mission. (Comment: He may have been hinting at a U.S. role in any negotiations. Each recent EB has had resolutions on cultural properities and education in the occupied territories and Jerusalem on the agenda that are negotiated behind the scenes by the UNESCO secretariat, Israel, several Arab States, the Palestinian observer and the United States. In recent years these negotiations have always led to a resolution that is adopted by consensus by the Board and without discussion.)

¶16. (C) Note: Baddoura has been deputy permanent delegate at the Lebanese delegation for several years and was scheduled to return to Beirut this summer. With the current situation in Lebanon and the retirement of the previous ambassador, Samira Hanna-El Daher (who will now serve as Lebanon's representative to the EB), Baddura has been asked to stay on indefinitely at UNESCO. (Comment: Hanna-El Daher's continued presence at the EB is a plus as she is moderate and in the past has been very friendly to the U.S.)

¶17. (C) Separately, Charge spoke August 10 with Israeli ambassador to UNESCO David Kornbluth. Kornbluth was very upset about the looming resolution and discussed a possible Israeli counter-resolution. He said that his Ministry, especially the Director General for International Organization Affairs, Ronnie Leshno, is furious that this issue is being raised in multiple UN fora and that Israel would push back very hard. Since Israel is not on the Board and cannot table resolutions, he indicated that his government may ask the United States to table any possible resolution from their side. He also indicated concern that the positive Israeli involvement with UNESCO in recent years is threatened by this resolution. He indicated that there will be demarches by the Israelis in Washington and Jerusalem.

¶18. (C) In a subsequent conversation, Kornbluth said that he had met Thursday afternoon with Francoise Riviere, the Assistant Director-General for Culture, who has been the DG's conduit to Israel since she served as his Executive Secretary. Kornbluth described a tense meeting during which Riviere told him that the resolution will deal with reconstruction, especially as (she said) hostilities are likely to be over by that time. She also told him that the DG will be sending a letter to Israel and Lebanon asking all parties to respect the 1954 Hague Convention on the protection of cultural properties during conflicts. Kornbluth asked Riviere to include language that neither party should use cultural properties to shield their military forces and she agreed.

¶19. (C) Kornbluth will meet with the Director-General on August 10 and urge him to do everything in his power to withdraw the resolution. (Comment: we do not really see that this is within the D-G's power.) He promised to provide a read-out after the meeting.

¶10. (C) Kornbluth also discussed the resolutions on Jerusalem and the occupied territories for the upcoming EB. Riviere told him that the secretariat will delay issuing the resolutions as long as possible to see how the situation in Lebanon evolves. Kornbluth made it clear that the language in previous resolutions was hard to reach and that Israel would not accept any changes.

Koss